

REMARKS

Entry of this Preliminary Amendment prior to examination is respectfully requested.

The amendment to the second paragraph on page 1 merely corrects a spelling error in the word "traveling."

The amendments to the claims are intended only to make them conform to United States patent practice and do not add new matter.

New claim 21 recites subject matter deleted from original claim 1. New claims 22, 23, and 24 recited subject matter deleted from original claim 11. New claim 25 recites material deleted from original claim 19. Therefore, these new claims do not add new matter.

If there is any fee due in connection with the filing of this Preliminary Amendment, please charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendix to the Preliminary Amendment of December 28, 2001

Please enter the following amendments.

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the second paragraph on page 1 of the specification, beginning at line 4, with the following paragraph:

More precisely, the present invention relates to apparatuses for manufacturing packaging bags from a continuously [travelling] traveling film fitted with at least one tape having an opening/closing function. More precisely still, the present invention relates preferably to apparatuses for manufacturing bags in which the tape having an opening /closing function extends transversely to the travel direction of the film.

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (AMENDED) An apparatus [Apparatus] for forming bags [by means of] comprising a continuously [travelling] traveling film (12) fitted with at least one tape (60) with an opening/closing function that is placed on the film (12), wherein the apparatus [being characterized by the fact that it includes] comprises at least one sensor (100) [suitable for detecting] that detects the presence of the tape (60) [having an opening/closing function] when [it] the tape (60) is in a predetermined position relative to means (30) for treating the film cyclically in order to form bags [and in particular relative to the means (30) provided on the apparatus for closing the bag-constituting film transversely].

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2. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to] as claimed in claim 1, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the sensor (100) is formed by a mechanical feeler.

3. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to] as claimed in claim 1 [or 2], [characterized by the fact that] wherein the sensor (100) is placed after a set of transverse heat-sealed jaws (30) relative to the travel direction of the film (12).

4. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in claim 1, [to 3, characterized by the fact that] wherein the sensor (100) is secured to equipment carrying the transverse heat-sealing jaws (30) so that the sensor (100) is moved cyclically towards and away from the film (12).

5. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in claim 1, [to 4, characterized by the fact that] wherein the sensor (100) is formed by a mechanical feeler having a pusher (102) associated with an electrical contactor (104).

6. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in 1, [to 5, characterized by the fact that it includes] further comprising means (16) for shaping the film into a tubular state, means (18) suitable for filling the tubular bag blank formed in this way, and means (30) suitable for closing the bag on the packaged product.

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7. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in claim 1, [to 6, characterized by the fact that it includes] further comprising means (14) suitable for fixing the tape (60) onto the film (12).

8. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in claim 1, [to 6, characterized by the fact that it uses] comprising a film (12) that is already fitted with the tape (60) having the opening/closing function.

9. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in claim 1, [to 8, characterized by the fact that it includes] further comprising a means for causing the film (12) to travel vertically.

10. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in claim 1, [to 8, characterized by the fact that it includes] further comprising means for causing the film (12) to travel horizontally.

11. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in claim 1, [to 10, characterized by the fact that] wherein the tape (60) [having] has an opening/closing function [is selected from the group comprising:] comprises complementary closure strips[, e.g. male/female strips or strips having complementary hooks;], tear/cut tapes[;], adhesive tapes[, which can optionally be peel-off tapes;] [and], or metal tapes for closing by folding.

12. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in claim 1 [to 11, characterized by the fact that] wherein the sensor (100) is

located along a longitudinal edge of the bag remote from the edge via which the tape (60) is delivered.

13. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in claim 1 [to 12, characterized by the fact that] wherein the sensor (100) is adapted to detect the presence of a tape (60), to detect that the tape (60) has been fed properly in the direction that is transverse to the travel direction of the film (12), and to detect that the tape is properly positioned in the longitudinal direction of the film (12).

14. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in claim 1 [to 13, characterized by the fact that] wherein each sensor (100) comprises dual feelers (100a, 100b) that are juxtaposed in the longitudinal travel direction of the film (12).

15. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in claim 1 [to 14, characterized by the fact that] wherein the tape (60) extends transversely to the travel direction of the film (12).

16. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in claim 1 [to 14, characterized by the fact that] wherein the tape (60) is disposed parallel to the travel direction of the film (12).

17. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to any one of claims] as claimed in claim 1 [to 14, characterized by the fact that] wherein the tape (60) is disposed obliquely relative to the travel direction of the film (12).

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18. (AMENDED) The apparatus [Apparatus according to] as claimed in claim 17, [characterized by the fact that it has] wherein two sensors (100) are disposed close to respective edges of the bag along a generator line that is oblique relative to the travel direction of the film (12) and that corresponds to the expected oblique position for the tape.

19. (AMENDED) A method of forming packaging bags using a continuously [travelling] traveling film fitted with at least one tape (60) having an opening/closing function placed on the film, wherein the method [being characterized by the fact that it] comprises [a] detecting [step consisting in detecting] the presence of the tape (60) having the opening/closing function by means of at least one sensor (100) in a predetermined position relative to the means (30) for cyclically processing the film in order to form a bag[, in particular relative to means (30) provided on the forming apparatus to close the bag-forming film transversely].

20. (AMENDED) The [A] method [according to] as claimed in claim 19, [characterized by the fact that] wherein the sensor (100) is formed by a mechanical feeler placed on the longitudinal edge of the film remote from the edge via which the tape (60) is delivered.

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